

## Network Services Technical Group

Minutes of meeting held on 11 May 2026, 9.30am to 4.15pm

Rydges Hotel Wellington, 28 Stewart Duff Drive, Rongotai, Wellington

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**Members present:** Grant Benvenuti (Chair), Ruahine Hemara, Sharlene Meyer, Steven Cooper, Gareth Williams, Ronald Beatty, Astad Kapadia, Shaurya Duggal, Trent Tscheuschler, Daniel Jardine, Matt Waters, Bernie Coster, Emma Lloyd, Jevon Carding, Neil Wembridge, Keith Scoles, Richard Le Gros (from 12.00pm)

**Apologies:** None

**Authority attendees:** Allen Davison, Stuart Johnston, Louise Stumbles, Andrew Zielinski, Lydia Ayto (from 2.30pm)

**Observer:** Brian Fitzgerald (EECA)

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### Introduction

The Chair welcomed the members to the meeting.

- 1.1 The members introduced themselves and discussed the purpose and outcomes of the Network Services Technical Group (NSTG).
- 1.2 The Chair spoke to the work of the previous Network Connections Technical Group and its contribution into the Network connections stage 1 work. Allen Davison spoke to the purpose of the newly formed NSTG being, in the first instance, to input into continuing work on export limits, improving application processes for small-scale distributed generation (DG), and Part 6 processing fees. The Chair noted that the discussion for NSTG is intended to test issues and options, rather than to establish final positions.

### Small-scale DG application processes

- 1.3 Allen Davison presented draft proposals relating to Part 6 application processes for small-scale DG. The proposals relate to application size thresholds and timeframes to process applications. The intent of the proposals is to make it faster, simpler and less costly (where justified) to connect.
- 1.4 The Authority noted it is looking for workable proposals as opposed to perfect solutions, given the pace of change in technology, customer behaviour, and network conditions.
- 1.5 The NSTG did not have a firm view on size thresholds but thought DG application processes should use kVA thresholds rather than kW thresholds. They also suggested the Code could explicitly note applicants and distributors can use a simpler process if appropriate and both parties agree (eg, use Process 1 than Process 2).
- 1.6 For processing timeframes, the NSTG noted application queues can fluctuate significantly, with peaks and troughs affecting the number of business days required to process applications. Small-scale DG applications generally involve administrative staff with power

system engineers more likely to be involved in larger DG applications only. It was noted some distributors (mostly smaller) commit limited resources to processing small-scale applications (eg, one administrative person only). It was suggested the Authority consider this when proposing shorter timeframes to process applications, although this may motivate distributors to invest in more automation, including software-as-a-service tools. However, it was noted automation involves some investment which may be a cost barrier for small distributors.

- 1.7 Time did not allow discussion of processing fees, and a follow up meeting will be arranged on this topic.

## **Flexible/dynamic export limits and smart inverters**

- 1.8 Andrew Zielinski presented on efficient export limits, including the now in effect default 10kW export limit and ELAM//BELAM mechanisms, coming into effect from 11 November 2026. Dynamic/flexible export limits and dynamic operating envelopes are a mechanism for managing increasing DG penetration. The Authority is considering whether regulation should encourage or require more flexible approaches, and whether distributors should be able to account for expected future constraints when assessing export limits.
- 1.9 NSTG discussed the potential benefits of dynamic export limits, including more equitable allocation of network headroom, reduced first-mover advantage, and more efficient use of network capacity. Discussion also focused on the need to manage consumer expectations where export capability may change over time, including the difficulties in retrospective capacity changes.
- 1.10 The NSTG discussed the merits of moving to smart inverters now, given NZ currently has low DG concentration and a nascent flexibility market. The NSTG had mixed views on whether NZ should pick a single approach to smart inverters or set the functions that a smart inverter should meet, leaving the door open to a wider range of tools (it was thought the latter approach would not lead to a wide proliferation of approaches). All parties agreed open communication protocols are essential.

## **Plug-in distributed generation (PIDG)**

- 1.11 Louise Stumbles presented on PIDG ('balcony solar') momentum worldwide, and some interest from businesses setting up to sell this technology in New Zealand.
- 1.12 PIDG safety risks were discussed but it was noted these issues sit primarily with WorkSafe, not the Authority. The Authority noted it is investigating how the Code may support PIDG uptake if the safety risks could be managed.
- 1.13 The Authority noted the Code does not apply to PIDG if it does not export. However, electrically isolating PIDG from a network requires work that is unlikely to be undertaken by a PIDG owner.
- 1.14 The NSTG considered the challenges with applying the current Code to PIDG and thought a lighter touch may be beneficial. It was generally agreed it would be difficult to obtain a robust and up-to-date record of where PIDG is installed, given PIDG is portable and how it is purchased/installed.
- 1.15 The NSTG thought PIDG export could be treated as unaccounted for electricity in the reconciliation process. Where the PIDG owner wants to be paid for export, they should have the option to install an import/export meter through a streamlined process.

- 1.16 The Authority discussed technical standards, noting PIDG is unlikely to comply with the inverter performance standards in the Code. The NSTG suggested the Authority investigate this issue further, including whether international standards could be used.
- 1.17 The Authority also discussed whether PIDG has potential (eg, at higher concentrations) to impact power quality on networks. The NSTG didn't have a view on this but noted some countries are retreating from PIDG for unknown reasons. It was suggested the Authority investigate this issue further.
- 1.18 The Authority agreed PIDG needs further investigation before we consult in September, but this work could be progressed quickly if WorkSafe's position on PIDG were to change.

## Network visibility

- 1.19 Lydia Ayto presented on proposed Code amendments that would require distributors to publish high-voltage network capacity information and the Authority's proposed technical specifications for distributors to implement hosting capacity analyses. The objective of this work is to improve transparency for access seekers and support a more data-driven electricity system.
- 1.20 NSTG discussed the proposed requirements, including that estimating or forecasting remaining network capacity may be difficult, and that any information published by distributors should be seen as indicative only, not certain. Also discussed that there is usefulness in ensuring conversations with access seekers remains helpful irrespective of what information is published. NSTG saw that having some more commentary on the problem this work is aiming to solve (eg, use cases) would help the group to feedback on the proposals.
- 1.21 The Authority noted that feedback from the consultation process would inform the scope of any technical specifications or guidance. The group expressed interest in being involved in developing or reviewing draft specifications.

## ELAM/BELAM update

- 1.22 Stuart Johnston presented on the Export Limits Assessment Methodology (ELAM) and Bespoke ELAM (BELAM). The objective of the work is to establish a nationally consistent framework and set of principles for assessing export limits, while recognising that distributors have differing network characteristics, visibility, modelling capacity, data quality, operational tools, and risk tolerances.
- 1.23 NSTG discussed the importance of consistency in consumer outcomes and assessment principles, rather than requiring identical calculation methodologies across all distributors. Members noted that distributors are operating at different levels of network maturity and capability but agreed that greater national alignment would improve transparency and customer confidence.
- 1.24 Members also discussed implementation challenges, including LV visibility, the need to avoid excessive prescription, and the potential for customer confusion where export limits may change over time as network conditions, operational practices, or assessment methodologies change.
- 1.25 The Authority noted that ELAM/BELAM is intended to be an iterative framework that can evolve over time as improved data, tools, operational experience, and network visibility become available.

## Closing remarks

1.26 The Authority noted the NSTG's feedback will inform proposals. The Authority will continue to work on proposals for the September paper and endeavour to share these with the NSTG before proposals are locked in. This material will also provide more background and evidence to support the proposed changes. The policy paper will note where there is wide variation in views between NSTG members.

## Next meeting

1.27 The NSTG agreed a 2-3 hour online session would be held over the next couple of weeks to discuss processing fees, metering and any other comments from members on what the NSTG work programme could include.

The meeting concluded at 4.15pm

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Confirming that the NSTG has approved that the meeting minutes are a true and correct record.

Dated: 25/05/26

Acting Chair

